

WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PRELIMINARY DESIGN PLANS FOR JONES POINT PARK, URBAN DECK AT WASHINGTON
STREET (GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PARKWAY), AND POTOMAC RIVER
WATERFRONT COMMUNITY PARK
City of Alexandria, Virginia and Prince George's County, Maryland

Report to the Federal Highway Administration and the National Park Service

March 1, 2001

Abstract

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has requested that the Commission review preliminary design plans for three separate elements of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement Project related to mitigation of the approved bridge design. These features include an urban deck overpass at Washington Street, improvements to Jones Point Park in Alexandria, Virginia, and development of the new Potomac River Waterfront Community Park at Rosalie Island in Prince George's County, Maryland. Highway officials began constructing the foundations for the new bridge in the fall of 2000. The submitted preliminary design plans continue to convey significant input and design effort toward providing a unified appearance for this important river crossing. The FHWA will continue to work with all stakeholders, including the Commission, to refine elements of the preliminary design plans as all elements of the Woodrow Wilson Replacement Bridge move toward finalization.

Authority

Pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act of 1952, as amended (40 USC 71d)

Commission Action

The Commission:

- **Commends** the FHWA for the high quality of the preliminary design featured in the plans for the urban deck at Washington Street, Jones Point Park, and the Potomac River Waterfront Community Park as part of the Wilson Replacement Bridge, and encourages FHWA to ensure that the harmonious and attractive designs it has developed are carried through to their completion.
- **Approves** the preliminary site and building plans for the urban deck overpass at Washington Street and improvements to Jones Point Park in Alexandria, Virginia, and

development of the new Potomac River Waterfront Community Park at Rosalie Island in Prince George's County, Maryland, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 2501.00(38.00)-40893, except for the gateway sentinel elements at Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, which we understand have been deleted from the project, and the restroom/maintenance buildings at Jones Point Park and Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, which are approved in concept only.

- **Requests** that, in the preparation of subsequent plan submissions for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement project, the FHWA:
 - Provide, as the Commission earlier requested, complete details on the Wilson Bridge project noise barriers as they relate to the three amenity areas.
 - Present more design information on the visual graphics and signage that is to be utilized at both the Urban Deck and Potomac River Community Park as a "gateway announcement" at each end of the Wilson Bridge.
 - In the development of the three amenity areas (the Urban Deck, Jones Point Park, and Potomac River Waterfront Community Park), ensure a high standard of design for light fixtures and signage.

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

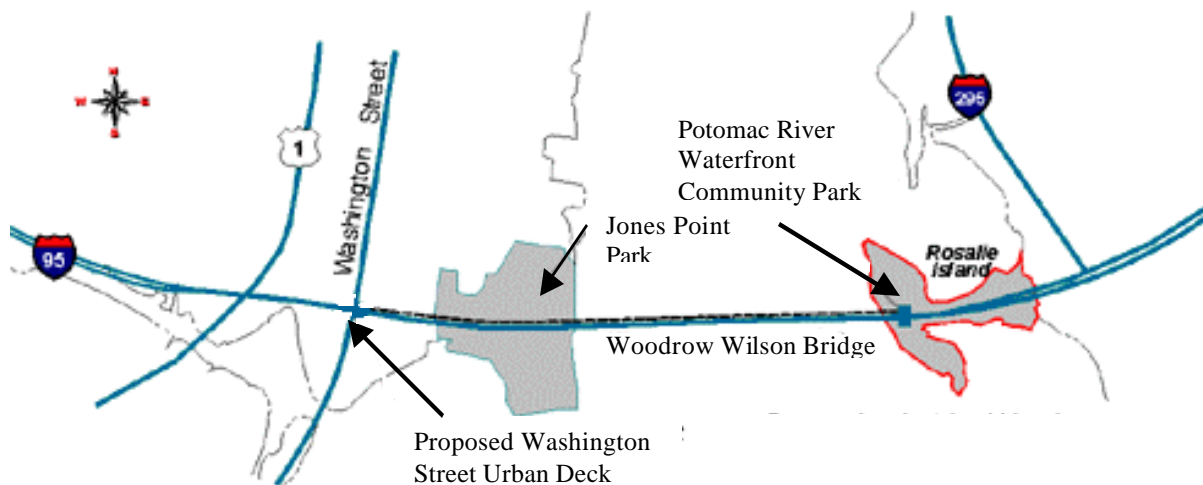
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

FHWA has submitted preliminary design plans for an urban deck overpass, improvements to Jones Point Park, and the development of a new Potomac River Waterfront Community Park that all relate to the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge (Wilson Bridge) Replacement. The Wilson Bridge carries Interstate 95/Interstate 495, the Capital Beltway, across the Potomac River. The bridge replacement and related highway improvements extend from Telegraph Road on the west to Maryland Route 210 (Indian Head Highway) on the east. The new bridge as designed will be 6,075 feet long and consist of twin parallel structures of 124 and 110 feet in width.

Originally constructed as a national memorial bridge to former President Woodrow Wilson, our 28th President, the existing six-lane bridge was opened to traffic in 1964 to accommodate approximately 75,000 vehicles per day. Today, over 190,000 vehicles use the bridge daily. At this rate, FHWA estimates that by the year 2004, the Wilson Bridge will require substantial rehabilitation or a restrictive ban on vehicles weighing more than 20,000 pounds for it to continue to accommodate regional traffic needs.

FHWA has scheduled the Wilson Bridge Replacement construction in stages over several years. They are:

1. Start of the construction access, dredging, and foundations in the Potomac River—by fall, 2000. This work stage is currently underway.
2. Begin the construction of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge (outer loop) superstructure—by 2001-2002.
3. Begin the I-295, US 1, and MD 210 interchanges—by 2001-2002.
4. Begin the Telegraph Road interchange—by 2002-2003.
5. Complete the Woodrow Wilson Bridge outer loop—by 2004-2005.
6. Demolish the existing Woodrow Wilson Bridge and complete inner loop—by 2006-2007.
7. Complete all interchanges—by 2006-2007.



LOCATION OF URBAN DECK, JONES POINT PARK, AND POTOMAC RIVER WATERFRONT PARK AT ROSALIE ISLAND

FHWA's current submission includes three elements:

- Preliminary design plans for development of an urban deck overpass at Washington Street in Alexandria, Virginia.
- Preliminary design plans for Jones Point Park.
- Preliminary design plans for a new Potomac River Waterfront Community Park at Rosalie Island on the Maryland shoreline.

The urban deck preliminary plans are part of a mitigation effort agreed to in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and the FHWA NEPA Record of Decision for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. This feature includes 2.25 acres of area encompassing the overpass for Washington Street (the George Washington Memorial Parkway) above Interstate Route 95. Also included in the design of the overpass are:

- Bike path connections to the Mount Vernon Trail, Jones Point Park, and the U.S. Route One bike path.
- A bike and walkway connection to Freedmen's Cemetery and Church Street northwest of the overpass.
- Reconstruction of Washington Street to include four vehicle traffic lanes (two north and two south) with a median of varying width in the middle.
- Nine- and twelve-foot wide pedestrian sidewalks on the west and east sides of the overpass, respectively.
- Extension of the Washington Street streetscape (landscape design) to approximately the Mount Vernon Parkway bridge over Hunting Creek, involving additional tree, shrub, and groundcover planting along with re-alignment of the Mount Vernon Trail near the Porto Vecchio residential development.

The second aspect of the submission involves Jones Point Park, a 59-acre park that is under jurisdiction of the National Park Service, but managed by the City of Alexandria. In accordance with the conceptual mitigation plan articulated in the Final EIS and the signed MOA, Jones Point Park would be enhanced as an active recreational facility with historic interpretations, and park and shoreline improvements. The following describes the items included as part of the preliminary design plan submission for the park. They include:

- A refurbished park entrance from Royal Street that provides primary vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian access to the park located under the bridge and at the northwest edge of the park.



URBAN DECK PLAN

- The Mount Vernon Trail that enters the park at the north, is routed eastward and southward along the riverside promenade, then proceeds west crossing under the bridge and is further located west to link with the urban deck level at the south side of I-95.



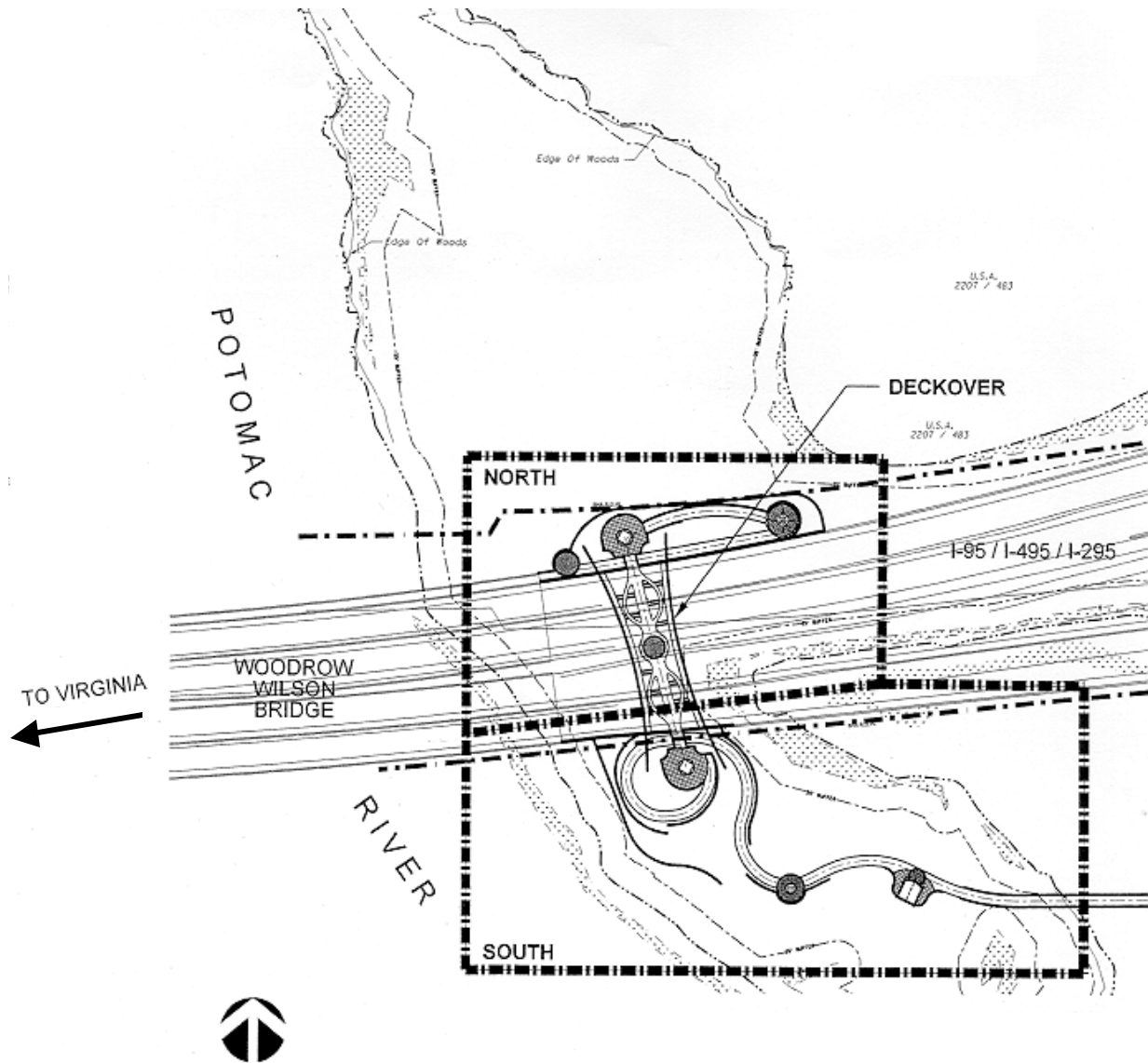
JONES POINT PARK PLAN

- The North Woodland that is an area consisting of existing woodland and wetland areas which will be managed as a forest conservation zone with a small pedestrian path at its north edge providing waterfront access.

- A Waterfront Area located north of the bridge that includes a wide pedestrian promenade with space for the Mount Vernon Bike Trail. The area would include the historic Virginia Ship Building Company ship finishing pier location and connect to the active recreation area, lawn terrace, children's tot lot, restrooms, and a maintenance facility.
- The Active Recreation area includes two multi-purpose grass fields with run-out areas and buffer areas for teams and spectators. At the south edge of the fields is a major east-west path that serves to connect the waterfront, parking areas, and park entrance and includes the Mount Vernon Trail.
- The Area Beneath the Bridge is comprised of a curving central vehicle circulation spine made up of a total of 250 parking spaces along two separate aisles. The parking lies directly east of Royal Street under the bridge. Further east beneath the bridge is the Mount Vernon Trail, while at the water's edge lies a hard court sports area, a kayak and canoe put-in/take-out dock, handicapped parking, and a vehicle turnaround.
- The South Park Area includes the existing wetlands along Hunting Creek, a large central lawn for special event programs, and the existing woodland grove along the Potomac River. The lawn is the focus of the passive interpretive area and is circled by a walkway that incorporates historic and archeological interpretation features, such as the original District of Columbia Boundary Line and the Rope Walk. At the south edge of this area are the Jones Point Lighthouse and the historic District of Columbia Cornerstone. To the northeast, Virginia Ship Building Company slipways will be interpreted and preserved in a limited fashion by cleaning, clearing, and preservation of exposed surfaces.

The Potomac River Waterfront Community Park, located at Rosalie Island in Prince George's County, Maryland, is the final portion of the submission and would be enhanced as a passive recreational facility in keeping with the natural conditions of the island. It includes a pedestrian deck above the Beltway on the island, path connections to the Potomac Heritage Trail and National Harbor, and the bikeway connection from the Wilson Bridge and Mount Vernon Trail to the west. The following describes the items included as part of the preliminary design plan submission for the park. They include:

- A steel and concrete deck-over element spanning I-95 and the east abutment area of the Wilson Bridge. The deck-over plaza above the bridge roadway varies in width from 78 feet at its narrowest point to 108 at its widest dimension, and exhibits seating areas, seat walls with interpretive information, concrete pavement walkways, and perimeter landscape planting areas.
- A bikeway/pedestrian path system consisting of a sixteen-foot-wide asphalt travel way connecting both the north and south sides of Rosalie Island.
- Three overlook areas, interconnected by the bikeway/pedestrian path, that are built with decorative surface pavers.
- Tiered retaining walls, at various locations, constructed of mechanically stabilized earth walls (precast facing panels with reinforced earth built in layers) and featuring a masonry-faced parapet wall.



POTOMAC RIVER WATERFRONT COMMUNITY PARK PLAN AT ROSALIE ISLAND

- Two main upper plazas at the north and south ends of the deck-over connected by small pathway bridges and featuring vertical “gateway sentinels” (about 40 feet in height) with internal illumination.
- A restroom/maintenance building featuring approximately 1,000 square feet of floor space and containing lavatory facilities, a drinking water fountain, and bicycle racks.



DECK-OVER DETAILED PLAN

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

The Commission, at its August 3, 2000 meeting, approved preliminary site and building plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3206.00(48.20)-40820 along with final foundation and Phase 1 dredging plans for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement, City of Alexandria, Virginia, Prince George's County, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3206.00(48.20)-40813. The action also commended FHWA for the high quality of the bridge design and encouraged FHWA to ensure that the harmonious and attractive design it has developed is maintained throughout the bridge approval process.

The Commission also indicated that, in the preparation of subsequent plan submissions for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement project, the FHWA:

- Work with Commission staff in the continued design development of the light fixtures and sign structures so that they reflect the same forward-looking treatment as the bridge; and
- Coordinate the design plans for Jones Point Park and the related overpass urban deck in Virginia, and Rosalie Island (Potomac River Waterfront Community Park) and the Beltway overpass deck in Maryland with the City of Alexandria, Prince George's County, and the Commission prior to submission.

CONSULTATION

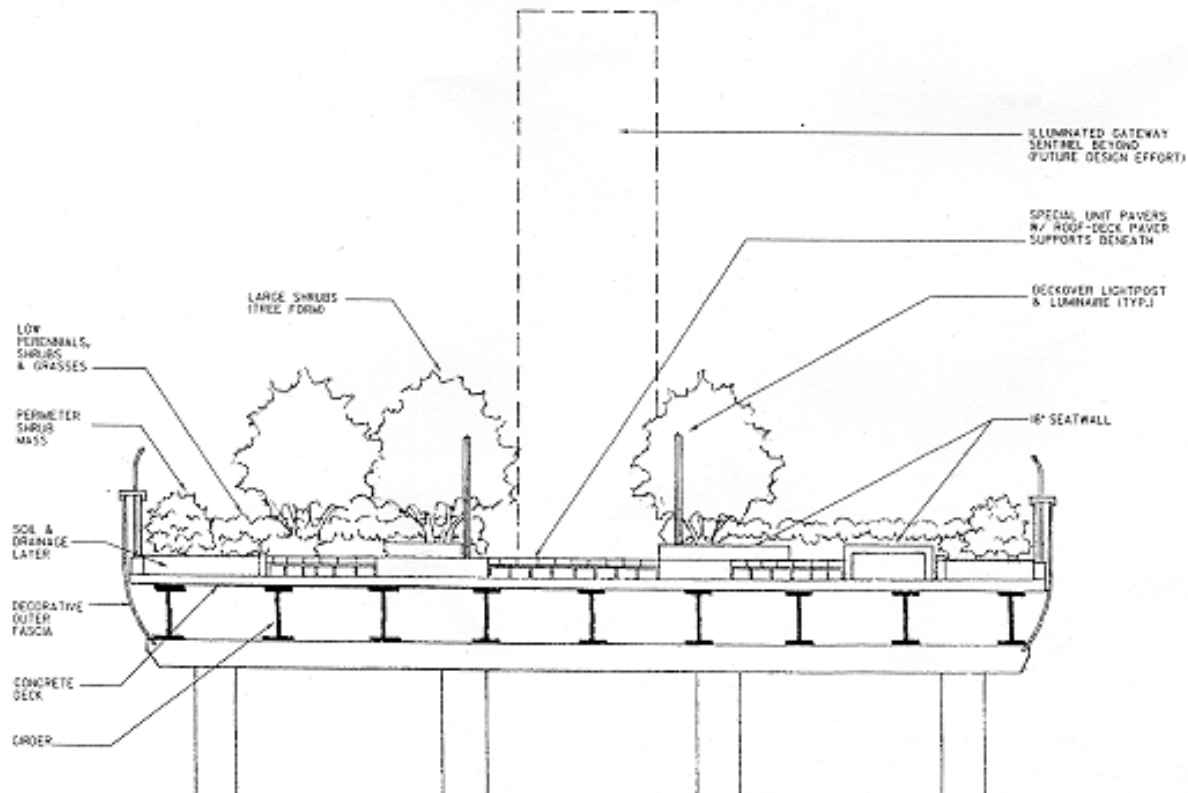
All of the submitted preliminary design work has been successfully coordinated by FHWA and its consultants with all local jurisdictions, public interest groups, and state agencies. The FHWA continues its coordination efforts with the National Park Service. Unanimous approvals from the Alexandria City Council, on December 18, 2000 and the Prince George's County Planning Board on December 14, 2000 have been secured for the preliminary development.

Additionally, in early December 2000, FHWA met with NCPC staff to review the Commission's request for information on noise barriers, trail connections, and design plans for Jones Point and Rosalie Island. At that time various discussions occurred about potential surface material types for retaining walls, paved surfaces, and design characteristics, etc.

EVALUATION

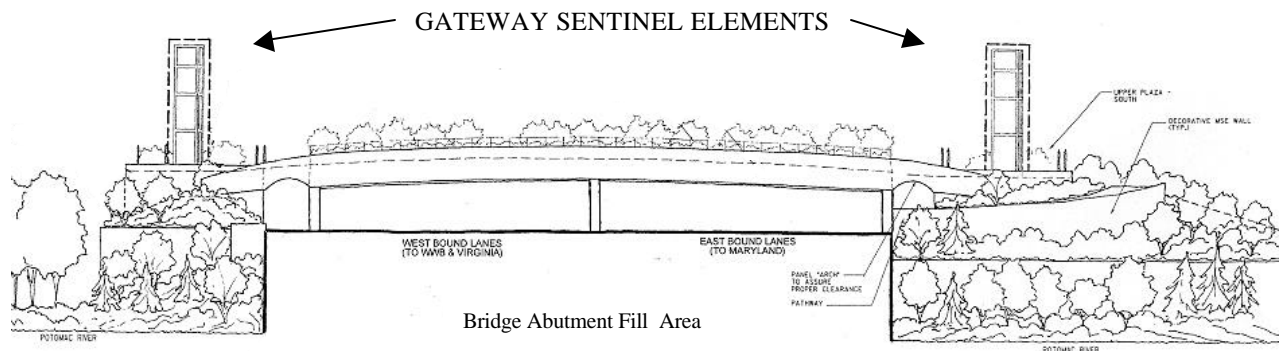
The staff recommends that the Commission approve the preliminary site and building plans for the urban deck overpass at Washington Street and improvements to Jones Point Park in Alexandria, Virginia, and development of the new Potomac River Waterfront Community Park at Rosalie Island in Prince George's County, Maryland, except for limited features.

Important progress has been made in the design of the three ancillary components of the Wilson Bridge design since the Commission's August 2000 review. The detailed design plans appear to successfully meet the public and local jurisdictional concerns involving mitigation of the bridge's monumental proportions and the impacts to the Potomac River environs involving recreational, natural, and historic resources. Moreover, the desire to improve the availability and access of these resources for public enjoyment, in conjunction with the more pragmatic requirements of a transportation facility has been adhered to. FHWA's concern for developing a harmonious design that integrates the design details of the park elements into the overall bridge concept is also apparent. We commend FHWA for its efforts and encourage FHWA to ensure that, as the design plans progress, the high quality of design for the final submission be maintained. This includes such things as ensuring that construction materials are of the highest quality and that architectural detailing and refinements contribute to the overall project design character.



DECK-OVER SECTION DETAIL SHOWING “GATEWAY SENTINEL” ELEMENT LOCATION

Given the above efforts and results, the staff nevertheless recognizes and expresses concern over particular elements of the submitted preliminary plans. Primarily, this concern is directed at the Potomac River Community Park design involving the vertical “gateway sentinels” feature of the park design. Commission staff had cautioned FHWA in the early consultation meeting that the vertical elements required a design dialog that emanates from the vocabulary of the bridge design and is a feature “of the bridge.” It is apparent that little progress has been achieved on that aspect of the park. Accordingly staff believes that in the preliminary design of the gateway sentinel elements, a design should be pursued that: limits its height impact as seen from bridge deck views; that is compatible in its lighting design with the main bridge; and exhibits a form harmonious with the overall bridge in material and composition. Consequently, the staff recommends only conceptually accepting the provision of a gateway feature at this time.



DECK-OVER ELEVATION VIEW AT EAST BRIDGE ABUTMENT

Although the drawings provided are encouraging, and suggest a high quality design for the details of the various pedestrian decks and Jones Point Park, we request the FHWA provide, as the Commission earlier requested, details on the Wilson Bridge project noise barriers as they relate to the three amenity areas. FHWA has indicated its willingness to work with the Commission staff in this regard, but to date has provided only limited plan details involving only the Virginia portion of the project. Staff requests that FHWA provides details of the noise barrier for the Maryland abutment areas of the project or that FHWA clearly identifies the reason for this omission.

We urge FHWA to continue working closely with the National Park Service to resolve any issues bearing on the areas of its jurisdiction. Moreover, the staff requests a preliminary design be provided for all the identified park restroom/maintenance buildings that includes an explanation of the building material types, colors, and visual appearance through detailed design plans. Because these features currently lack this information, staff recommends limiting their approval to the concept level only.

Lastly, staff requests more design information on the visual graphics and signage that is to be utilized at both the urban deck and Potomac River Community Park as a “gateway announcement” at each end of the Wilson Bridge. Design information should be provided for all areas involving lighting and signage for the park areas, and this should be coordinated with the lighting of the main bridge. Staff looks forward to reviewing these, and all other above described issues, in the further submission of the park plans for Jones Point Park and Rosalie Island and the proposed decks over I-95.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Commission has received two inquiries from the public dealing with the current submission items involving the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement.

The Fairfax County Wetlands Board Chair submitted a written copy of testimony addressing the Board's concerns presented on February 10, 2000, about the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The thrust of the issues presented in the testimony deal with the Impact Statement and project impacts on wetlands. Because the FHWA issued a Record of Decision on the project deriving from the NEPA process and its public comments, the issues noted in the copy of the testimony have been addressed in the Record of Decision. Nevertheless, specific issues highlighted in the Board's testimony are addressed in the two Virginia project areas as applicable and include:

- Maintaining the existing wetlands at Jones Point Park along Hunting Creek.
- Preserving a large central lawn for special event programs and the existing woodlands along the Potomac River that involves:
 - Woodland Area of 17 acres; Wetlands Within Woodland of 6.5 acres
 - Wetlands (outside Woodland) of 3 acres
 - Grove area of 1.75 acres

The North Woodland at Jones Point Park is an area consisting of existing woodland and wetland areas, which will also be managed as a forest conservation zone.

The Commission has authority to review the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Replacement as it relates to the bridge structure from landing to landing, including the drawspan, operator's control tower, parks, and overpass decks. The Virginia landing is the bridge abutment located generally at Royal Street, west of Jones Point Park. This includes the uses under the bridge and the overpass urban deck at Washington Street (George Washington Memorial Parkway) that is part of the approach to the Wilson Bridge. The Maryland landing is the bridge abutment located on Rosalie Island, including the overpass deck, which is part of the bridge approach from Maryland. Because the extent of the Commission's authority does not include the development of the project road interchanges, the staff is unable to address concerns about those features involving effects to the Cameron Run. It should be noted, however, that mitigation measures are specified in the Record of Decision for those areas.

The second public comment identified support for the project elements of the Urban Deck and Jones Point Park, but was concerned with the specific design of the features submitted and requested an opportunity to review the submission information. Staff provided the submission materials to the individual in early February.

*CONFORMANCE*National Historic Preservation Act

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the proposed Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement was signed in October and November of 1997. The signatories were FHWA (the lead agency), NPS, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the State Historic Preservation Offices for Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The signatories and other parties are continuing to consult on specific aspects of the project as they are developed. The City of Alexandria and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) are continuing to be active participants in review of the project (including those aspects pursuant to the MOA), as well. A Design Review Working Group, composed of the signatories and affected local jurisdictions and chaired by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, meets regularly to review plans developed by the project team.

FHWA and NPS determined that the bridge project would have an adverse effect on the Alexandria Historic District, Jones Point Lighthouse, the District of Columbia South Cornerstone, and two terrestrial archaeological resources within Jones Point Park. In addition, the bridge project was determined to have an effect on the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway/George Washington Memorial Parkway. The signatories also agreed that the project might have an effect on the Freedmen's (Contraband) Cemetery in Alexandria.

The MOA contains numerous stipulations on the documentation and treatment of known and of potential historic or archaeological resources during the construction of the bridge. The signatories also agreed to certain goals during the design and review of the project. In addition, the bridge design and other project elements are to take into account the historic plan of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and NPS's General Management Plan for the facility; the agreement between NPS and the City of Alexandria for the management of Jones Point Park and its resources; the agreement with the Daughters of the American Revolution for the management of Jones Point Lighthouse; and effects on archaeological resources.

The MOA stipulates that the project is to be designed to avoid all temporary and permanent impacts to the Freedmen's (Contraband) Cemetery. In the current submission, improvements in the Freedmen's' Cemetery are limited to filling and re-grading the area behind the proposed I-95 wall; this grading will provide a more level area for future improvements in the cemetery and adjacent area, including a proposed pathway to Church Street. The Friends of Freedmen's Cemetery (Friends) is a volunteer group that has been working closely with project planners in the development of proposals for this historic resource and the immediate area. The City of Alexandria is supportive of the Friends' role and expertise in this regard.

Specifically for Jones Point Park, the signatories developed goals for the treatment of the seawall, the D.C. Cornerstone, the slipway, and for interpretation of the historic features of the park. An archaeological investigation is currently underway; plans for the park will be developed further when that investigation is completed and treatment plans are devised.

Plans for connections through and across Rosalie Island have been well received to date and are the subject of ongoing review by representatives of the Design Review Working Group from the Maryland Historical Trust, M-NCPPC, and Prince George's County.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FHWA prepared a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) and Record of Decision for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project. These documents were prepared in April and June 2000, respectively.

On June 16, 2000, NCPC issued its own FEIS which adopted the FHWA FSEIS relating to NCPC's authority for review and approval of this proposed action. The purpose of the FEIS was to identify potential environmental impacts, as defined by CEQ regulations, resulting from the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project. The FEIS examined alternatives to the proposed action and the impacts of those alternatives. The FEIS also addressed mitigation of adverse resulting effects from the alternatives. NCPC elected to adopt the existing April 2000 FSEIS pursuant to Section 1506.3 of the CEQ regulations. This adoption was accomplished through staff review and approval of the FHWA document. The adopted FEIS was available to the public for review more than thirty days before Commission action.

The submitted preliminary design plans are in conformance with all decisions arrived at and documented in the NEPA process.

Endangered Species Act

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the FHWA entered into formal Section 7 consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and prepared a Biological Assessment that was submitted to USFWS on September 22, 1999. That document quantifies the extent of direct and indirect impacts to bald eagle habitat as a result of the proposed project. USFWS issued a Biological Opinion on April 14, 2000, characterizing the anticipated effects of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project on bald eagle habitat and identifying the terms and conditions for appropriate mitigation of these adverse effects. The provisions below are nondiscretionary, and must be implemented by FHWA, so that they become binding conditions for the exemption in Section 7(o)(2) to apply. The stipulations include:

- Construction must be timed to significantly reduce the risk of eagle nest abandonment on the adjacent Betty Blume Park (M-NCPPC ownership).
- Retaining the wooded shoreline on Rosalie Island and reducing the limits of disturbance to the northern portion of the island that includes Maryland SHA and NPS lands.

The Biological Opinion provided by USFWS to FHWA indicates that implementing protective measures during construction associated with fish passage improvements in Rock Creek Park as a project mitigation action will avoid the incidental take of the Hay's Spring Amphipod found in

Rock Creek Park. The Biological Opinion also includes other requirements that authorize proceeding with the project provided that the agency adheres to the terms and conditions of the Biological Opinion.

The National Marine Fisheries Service requested a Biological Assessment of the Shortnose Sturgeon that determined the probability of the presence of the species in the vicinity of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project to be very low. Nevertheless, time-of-year restrictions on the use of underwater blasting and mitigation measures for removal of debris and bridge demolition activities will be implemented during bridge construction.

Federal Capital Improvements Program

This project was included in the Federal Capital Improvements Program (FCIP), Fiscal Years 2001–2005, adopted by the Commission on August 3, 2000. The total project cost in this program was \$1.89 billion. A total of \$950 million was programmed in the FCIP between Fiscal Years 2001-2005. In November 2000, after publication of the FCIP document, an additional \$600 million had been provided by the Congress for the project.

Comprehensive Plan

At the design stage, the proposed ancillary park developments would affect the Potomac shoreline and floodplain, wetlands, ambient noise levels. Policies in the Environment Element of the Comprehensive Plan applicable to these impacts include:

- If construction in a floodplain is necessary, (1) the site should be returned as close as possible to its natural contours; (2) floodplain fill should be minimized; (3) grading requirements should be minimized; and (4) free natural drainage should be preserved.
- Land uses adjacent to Wetlands should be compatible with the preservation of natural resources supported by the Wetlands.
- Highway related development design should be sensitive to existing and proposed adjacent land uses and should employ the use of barrier attenuations, where necessary.

Policies contained in the Parks, Open Space and Natural Features Element apply to shoreline protection and the preservation and enhancement of river views involved with the developments, and state:

- Natural shoreline areas in the National Capital Open Space System should be retained in their natural condition or be appropriately landscaped for a distance of 150 to 200 feet from the water's edge, if possible. Large paved parking areas and other non-water related development should be discouraged within the area.

- The Y-shaped composition of open water spaces created by the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers in the L'Enfant City and its environments should be treated as an urban river setting. Development in this area should preserve and enhance the variety of views and vistas proposed in the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans, respect the grand scale of the river landscape, and allow for the appreciation of the extensive areas of water landscape. Docking areas and waterfront buildings should be integrated with the generally low and continuous line of river embankments.
- The Oxon Hill Children's Farm in Prince George's County and Bellehaven Park on the Virginia side of the Potomac River are located in the vicinity of the proposed bridges and their river views would be affected.
- The proposed park developments would require easements for construction on Jones Point Park, Rosalie Island, the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Jones Point Park and portions of Rosalie Island are federally owned and are designated for Natural Park use in the Comprehensive Plan. The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway is a designated national landmark, a Gateway to the Nation's Capital and is part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The following additional policies from the Parks, Open Space and Natural Features Element apply:
 - Natural Parks...should be established, protected, and maintained to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the significant features of the National Capital.
 - The George Washington Memorial Parkway should be maintained as a scenic corridor which not only serves as a spectacular Gateway artery to the Nation's Capital, but which also preserves its important historic associations. Its scenic, historic, and recreational aspects should be emphasized and protected, even at the expense of its traffic-carrying role.
 - The Mount Vernon Trail is a part of the National Trail System extending from the Region and beyond.

Two additional policies in this element relating to bridge design and enhancement of Gateways also apply:

- Bridges over rivers and streams should be designed to retain the natural continuity of waterways, shorelines and valleys. Whenever possible, bridges and their approaches should enhance the sense of arrival, gateway or transitional qualities inherent in river crossings.
- Roadways in the Interstate Highway System are important Gateways used by Visitors and should be maintained in a manner which protects and enhances their landscape character and quality, gives attention to scenic views from the road, and

provides informative signs to assist Visitors. Advertising signs and bordering development should be carefully controlled to avoid adverse visual impacts.

The park proposals would also require an easement for construction in the Alexandria Historic District. An applicable policy the Preservation and Historic Features Element specifies:

- New construction on Historic Landmarks or in Historic Districts should be compatible with the historical architectural character and cultural heritage of the landmark or districts. In design, height, proportion, mass, configuration, building materials, texture, color and location, new construction should complement these valuable features of the landmark or district, particularly features in the immediate vicinity to which the new construction will be visually related.